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GB 64-25
22 June 1964

SOVIET SHIFT OF SOVIET ANTARCTIC MAIN BASE
TO OFFER ADVANTAGES

The Soviet Union has announced that its Antarctic expedition headquarters will be moved from its heretofore main station Mirny to its newest station Molodezhnaya, 1100 n. miles to the west. The shift is to be made by the Tenth Soviet Antarctic Expedition in 1964-65.

The move has not been entirely unexpected and presages a major change in the coverage of Soviet operations. The shift will simultaneously resolve the problem of the intolerable physical deterioration at the main base and place the USSR in an ideal location to expand prestige-building operations into the last major research-gap area of Antarctica between 20°W and 60°E. With Molodezhnaya at 67°S-46°E, and Novolazaryevskaya at 70°46'S and 11°50'E, the USSR will be in an advantageous position to gain not only the benefits of basic research but also a substantial favorable input into Soviet "peaceful competition" objectives -- especially in the Southern Hemisphere -- that accrue from the publication of original research, and the perpetuation of Soviet geographic discoveries through Soviet names on maps and in various subsequent mass-media accounts. Activity in this research-gap area had already begun this past austral summer (1963-64) when geophysicist Andrey Kapitsa led a 16-man traverse through untrodden areas on a 1728 n. mile

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traverse from Vostok to Molodezhnaya via the "Pole of Inaccessibility" station.

Mirnyy, initially selected because of the presence of two sizeable rock outcrops, proved to be a poor site owing to the high winds, heavy snows, and the rapid movement of the continental glacier in the area. Coupled with the narrow spacing of the buildings, which impedes rapid annual snow removal, the buildings after nine years have become covered to a degree that substantial rebuilding investments would be required. The Soviets also have found that the drifting snow has adversely affected instruments located in the open. Molodezhnaya, on the other hand, had been first spotted by a Soviet ship-based surveying and mapping operation in March 1957, and was initially occupied by a summer team during the Seventh Expedition's operations in the austral summer of 1961-62. The following season, 1963-64, the Soviets installed the first two permanent structures and began their year-round operations. Molodezhnaya offers the advantages of greater protection from winds, less snow, and easier unloading on stronger ice.

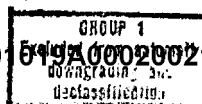
Mirnyy will not be closed down, at least not in the immediate future, since it is necessary for the supply of the interior station Vostok at the South Geomagnetic Pole. Continued operation of Vostok by the Tenth Expedition is indicated in plans to deliver a new ionospheric station.

In time, if the intercontinental delivery of key personnel and low-bulk supplies becomes an annual certainty at Molodezhnaya, the Mirnyy station may be reduced to a lower-level or summer-season activity.

Sources: FBIS, No. 119, 18 June 1964
(TASS International Service in English, 1029 GMT, 17 June 1964)

New York Times, 19 June 1964

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Soviet Shift of Soviet Antarctic Main Base to Offer Advantages.

To prepare a brief analysis of the causes and implications of the shift of the Soviet Antarctic headquarters from Mirny to its newest station.

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None

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